

## McCollum Statement on Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System

May 29, 2014

Washington, DC – In response to the Department of Veterans Affairs inspector general's report on the misconduct at the Phoenix VA health care system, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN) released the following statement:

“After thirteen consecutive years of war, millions of new veterans joining the system, and the expanded eligibility for Agent Orange exposed Vietnam era veterans, the VA health system is overwhelmed and it needs to be modernized. Congress has a duty to ensure our veterans get the health services they deserve. Expanding the number of clinicians available to see patients and providing funding to modernize VA health records brings us closer to that goal. Looking for scapegoats does not.

“Calling for the resignation of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki before all the facts are in may make politicians feel good, but it does nothing to address the real needs of the VA health care system. It does not confront the misconduct and possible criminal neglect of veterans by officials at the Phoenix VA medical facility.

“I support expanding the inspector general's investigation to include all VA facilities and the inclusion of the Department of Justice in pursuing criminal misconduct at the Phoenix VA medical facility. Those who neglected to properly care for our veterans must be held accountable. I urge President Obama to identify the reforms and resources needed to ensure that a situation like this will never happen again. Congress has the responsibility to conduct bipartisan oversight and provide the resources necessary to build a health care system that works for our veterans. It is time to get to work.”

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations Committee. She is Democratic Co-Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus.